

# EX-Ls EX-PRESS

Volume 23 Number 3  
SUMMER 2005

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### **Luncheon Reservations to Vicky Jared**

Please send your luncheon reservations to Vicki Jared at  
4849 John Muir Road, Martinez CA 94553

➤➤ **Note that the price is now \$20 per person** <<

The EX-Ls Board of Directors and members gratefully acknowledge the  
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Administration  
for their continuing support.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

### **Gene Binnall**

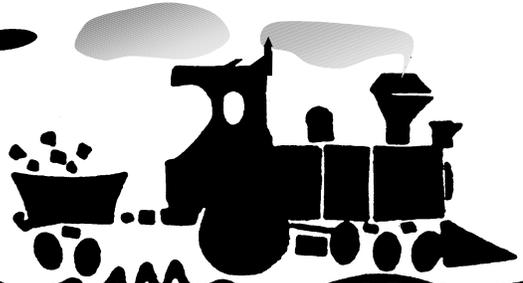
The EX-Ls Board meets four times a year, a little over a month before each luncheon. This is the official body chartered to carry on the business of the group and make the important decisions significant to the life of this group: Salmon, or Sole in August? After careful deliberation, using a mathematical progression that involves a single-bit binary series, the group has determined that Salmon is to be the selection for August. Of course this could change.

We do conduct a few other orders of business, too - some luncheon organization details - who will be our guest speaker? - how is our treasury (and our treasurer) holding up? - any updates for the web site? - input for the newsletter - any activities with University retirement groups that affect LBNL retirees - and we always get an interesting LBNL update from Terry Powell. What ever we do, we have fun. We meet in the LBNL cafeteria, and our meetings are open to all members. And, the cafeteria also has a great coffee bar that is open until 4:00 PM.

The July Board meeting was a little more special than usual. Thanks to Terry and her diligence, she convinced our Laboratory Director, Dr. Steven Chu, to join us for a half an hour or so of the meeting. Dr. Chu was quite pleased with how well the competition to award the LBNL management contract had gone. (Though he forgot to mention it, I'm sure that he had in the back of his mind how grateful he was for the EX-Ls' contributions that so greatly influenced the decision to award the contract to the University of California for another five years. It probably just slipped his mind). His big concern now is that the UC will score well enough in annual reviews to continue the contract for another five years without the necessity to recompet. We also had an opportunity to discuss the LBNL 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration coming up in 2006. Dr. Chu is very proud of Laboratory accomplishments, our close association with UCB, and the new directions in science that we have taken. He is enthusiastic about our potential for a few more Nobel Prizes. He also shared some of his ideas for the future including the possibility of new funding sources. He is exploring the possibility of more programs and facilities coordinated through campus and funded by the state. It was indeed an enjoyable and enlightening meeting.

Remember to keep looking for old photos and other memorabilia that can be used in displays at the LBNL 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, probably about October of 2006. Also remember that you are eligible for no-cost membership with the UC Retirement Center. For more information, go to: <http://thecenter.berkeley.edu/>, or call their staff at (510) 642-5461. You can join on campus at 2 Boalt Hall #7200.

# EX·LS Ex·press



## 2005 Summer Lunch

**Date:** Thursday, August 18, 2005

**Where:** Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto  
1919 Fourth St.  
Berkeley

**Time:** No-host Bar: 11:30 AM  
Lunch Served: 12:00 Noon

**Speaker:** Mina Bissell

**Subject:** Half the Secret of the Cell is Outside the Cell: The Role of  
Extracellular Matrix in Normal and Malignant Breast Tissue

**Menu:** Bay Shrimp Louie Salad (with cup of chowder)  
Salmon (with dinner salad)  
Flatiron Steak w/ mushroom demi-glaze (with dinner salad)

**Cost:** \$20 per person (PREPAID) <<<< Note price

**Reservations:** Please make checks payable to EX-Ls. Send to  
Vicky Jared  
4849 John Muir Road  
Martinez, CA 94553

**Spenger's management policy makes it absolutely imperative  
that they receive reservations by August 15, 2005**

**(Reservation slip on last page)**

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## From our May lunch

*Reported by John Kadyk, EX-Ls First Vice-President:* Lina Galtieri of the Physics division, entertained us with her slides of the recent trek she made to the basecamp of K2, the world's second highest mountain. K2 lies in the Karakoram range, and has an altitude of 28,251 feet (Mt. Everest is at 29,035 feet). The first ascent of K2 was done only relatively recently, in 1954, by an Italian team. Lina's month-long trip took place last summer, between July 29 and August 29. She was one of a group of six on a trek organized by an Australian company (Fieldtouring). They followed the route through Pakistan taken by the first climbers of K2. (American companies considered this Pakistan route to be too risky politically for US citizens, and their approach was instead from the Chinese side of K2. Lina thought the China route less interesting than the Pakistan route, which follows the lateral moraine of the Baltoro glacier and the Indus river.)

Her slides included spectacular mountain scenery as well as photos of the people and culture of the region, especially the beautiful mosques and palaces in Lahore. Also of special interest were the scenes of the Khyber pass connecting Pakistan and Afghanistan, which became an escape route for the Taliban during the Afghan-US war, and which may be the hiding place of Bin Laden. Security was very strict in most public places.

The trip began at Islamabad (1500 – 2000 feet elevation), on the Karakoram Highway along the Indus river to Skardu (8000'), a journey of two long days in a van, on a one-lane road with few passing places. This was a nerve-racking trip, since the driving was very fast, despite the limitations of the poor road. At Skardu, two days were spent awaiting the trek leader, porters, and supplies. Leaving then for Askoli (10,000') by jeep, and still without porters, there was another hair-raising drive along steep river banks; one member of the group became ill and had to drop out of the trip entirely. There were no porters at Askoli either, but the group proceeded anyway, now on foot, on the actual hiking trek, with minimal equipment and food. The "leader" caught up with the group three days later, with a reduced contingent of porters.

It was 70 kilometers (about 45 miles) of difficult hiking, up and down for six days, to reach Concordia (16,800'), first through the foothills of the Karakoram range, then along the Baltoro Glacier lateral moraine. There was essentially no trail, only some "ducks" [for you non-trekkers out there, "ducks" are low cairns that serve as route markers (ed)] in very rocky terrain. This required eight days of strenuous hiking, with the oxygen content of the air less than half that at sea level. However, there was beautiful scenery enroute, and the weather was very good. Finally, on Aug. 14 Concordia was reached, and became the group camp for 5 nights. (Concordia was named after Place de la Concorde in Paris.) Many glaciers converge there, and it is surrounded by high snow-covered mountains on all sides – an exhilarating experience, much more impressive than at Kala Patar, above the Everest basecamp, said Lina (who was there in 1993).

Five days were spent in Concordia, including a hike around the Concordia area and a hike to the Godwin-Austen (another name for K2) glacier at 17,200'. On this latter hike, the full magnificence of K2 came into view. Thus far the weather had been gorgeous, but after this third

day it began to turn, and a group member got altitude sickness, prompting a layover day. As the rain turned to snow, the plans for going up the Vigne Glacier to the Gondogoro La pass (18,800') had to be abandoned. Concordia lay under six inches of snow as the group started back, following the same route. Coming back took only 3.5 days, hiking about 12 hours per day – very exhausting. One memorable experience on the return was when Lina “lost” the group, at night, about 400' below the camp, and without a flashlight. Finally, two porters came to the rescue using kerosene lamps late at night (10:30 pm).

Lina recommends this trip (!), providing you have an experienced and reliable leader: her group did it with essentially no guide. Afterwards, however, she says, you remember only the good parts.

*Luncheon Attendees:*

Maxine Adams	Janis & Ned Dairiki	Bob Mortiboy
Al Amon	Jack & Darlene Franck	Barrie Pardoe
Shirley Ashley	Bill Gilbert	Fred Perry
Robert Avery	Abe & Marjorie	Conway Peterson
Bill Baker	Glicksman	Terry Powell
Dick Baker	Don & Becky Grether	Don Prestella
Winnie Baker	Jim Haley	Ed Reieux
Jo Barrera	Inge Henle	Sig & Cindy Rogers
Tom & Marcia Beales	Wini Heppler	Ron & Sonia Scanlan
Bill Benson	Roger Hughes	Clay Sealy
Gene & Myrna Binnall	Richard & Vicky Jared	Doug & Claire Shigley
Bob & Elizabeth Birge	John & Ann Kadyk	Elmer Silva
Igor Blake	Bud Larsh	Robbie Smits
Stan Boyle	Branko Leskovar	Hugh & June Stoddart
Dick Burleigh	Ed Lofgren	William Turner
Geores & Katie Buttner	Ken Lou	Dick Wolgast
Janice & John Button-Shafer	Katie Lucas	Gertrude Young
Per & Eleanor Dahl	Donald & Bertha Miller	Jon Zbasnik
	Ken Mirk	Speaker Lina Galtieri
	Gerry Moore	

**Editor's Note**

Welcome to our Giant Travel Issue. This is something of an experiment...one that, given the usual level of contributions, is not likely to be repeated. Be that as it may, summer is travel time, and the Ex-Ls have been travelling. You have already encountered John Kadyk's report of Lina Galtieri's spectacular trek to the K2 base camp (If you missed her talk, or would like to see some of the slides again, go to [www.neosophist.com/K2/K2pagex.htm](http://www.neosophist.com/K2/K2pagex.htm)). We also have a contrasting pair of Alaskan adventures, with the Bakers proceeding generally northward and the Dahls trending south. And as if that weren't enough snow and ice, we have the Kadyks' visit to Iceland. Then there are some observations generated by the Stevenses recent China venture, and to top it

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all off, Episode Four of Geores Buttner's romance of the sixes. Please let me know if it's all too much.

I apologize for the salmon/sole glitch in the last NL. We are alternating between the two as the luncheon fish course, and I failed to complete the changeover last time. This time I got it right (I think: It's salmon all the way.)

And as always, articles or ideas for articles are welcome; the deadline for each issue is ten days after the preceding Board meeting (a full year's schedule is listed on the back page). You can contact me at david\_stevens@comcast.net, at 1107 Amador Ave, Berkeley 94707, or 510-524-2904.

dfs

### **New Responsibilities**

There are two new workers in the Ex-L vineyards: Vicky Jared and Gene Binnall. Vicky is now On the Job as Activities Chair, and you should send your luncheon reservations to her rather than to Bud. (Her address appears in three places in this newsletter; ***there is no excuse for getting it wrong!***) Gene, of course is not new to the vineyard, but he has taken on the added job of our representative on the Berkeley Retirement Center Policy Board. We thank them both.

### **E-mail Distribution List**

We are in the early stages of establishing an e-mail distribution list that would be used only for late-breaking Ex-Ls news. Inclusion on the list is completely voluntary. If you would like to be on the list, please complete the form below and send it to **Dick Baker, 635 Yuba Street, Richmond, CA 94805**. The form must be signed for the indicated address to be added to the list. (You may list more than one address, but be aware that all addresses will be used for distributions.) Alternatively, you can sign up at the luncheon; there will be a sign-up sheet at the registration table.

Please add me to the e-mail distribution list; my e-mail address is:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Luncheon Tickets

Spenger's has requested that we help expedite luncheon service by placing our luncheon tickets at our places no later than 11:50. Please make sure that they are clearly visible so that the servers can get an accurate count for each table.

### **Trip Reports – I: Lions in Illinois** *Episode 4 of the Route 66 Run Recollections* **Geores Buttner**

There are two lions sculptured in stone at the entrance to a prison facility in Joliet, Illinois, one on each side of the stairway leading to the front doors. Their names are June and July and they well deserve to be described as statuesque. “Magnificent” isn’t bad either. Noticed them on the bike ride into Joliet and admired them again during the run back to Lia. They needed photographing, morning would provide the best lighting.

From the sidewalk in front of the building the next morning, the viewfinder of camera Omega, found lion July (after about a 10,000-mile rotation) unmoved from his previous position, but now in much better lighting for a portrait. Halfway across the street returning to Lia, decided to return for a photo of June as well. Why not? Well it turned out to be not such a good idea.

*What are you doing with that camera?*, came forth a voice of obvious high authority. After remembering that taking a photo of June was the goal, so informed him. He was an immaculate man, about five-foot six, fifty or so, and dressed as though he might donate his old clothes once a week. Compared to the runner it was like culture versus degradation. He made up for his stature with a Napoleonic demeanor; although his question seemed silly he might have known that he was speaking to the source of recent fits of dementia along Route 66.

*This is a correctional center, you can't take any pictures here.*

No argument! No confession! Still have a photo of July, and still have Omega.

This episode was the last confrontation of three in quick succession with Illinois authorities, and the third of an eventual nine in the State. The first necessitated a nonstop 7-mile run because the runner was banned, by The Patrol, from parking anything anywhere near a stretch of oil storage and railroad tankers. The next exciting confrontation was in the exact middle of downtown Joliet when two officers parked their blinking yellow squad car at the curb on the corner where the runner stood looking around.

What are you doing here, sir? (Illinois cops are very polite and respectful these days.)

Just looking for a safe place to lock up Blue for a couple of hours. (It was the truth, but not a real good way to express it.) There was more polite conversation, an identity requirement, and some 2-way radio chat from the squad car.

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Joliet's three correctional facilities, where John Westley Powell was appointed Sergeant Major, have a colorful past. A web search can reveal a host of historically notorious inmates and such, and also details on how the most architecturally spectacular facility was built with limestone and convict labor for the paltry sum of \$75,000. The 761 unfortunate inmates that it was constructed to house with inadequate toilet facilities became more unfortunate when the population reached 1239 (higher than any other single prison), sanitation suffered, and dysentery flourished. Search results also reveal that the site guarded by June and July and the man in the stylish short leather is now actually *The Reception and Diagnostic Center for the Illinois Department of Corrections*. But, more interesting, is the information about its stint as a women's correctional center. Between 1896 and 1932 the State of Illinois lowered the threshold of incarceration for (slap-on-the-wrist) misdemeanors for womanhood and put them to work. They cleaned 500,000 clothing items per month, wove cane chair seats and rugs, assembled boxes, gardened, sewed, darned, cooked, and cleaned six days a week to repay the debt owed to the State for their egregious crimes.

Oh, and by the way, one web site displays 450 printer friendly pictures of insides and outsides of Joliet prisons. One publication referred to had a logo with both June and July prominently displayed along with the rest of the front of their 'not to be photographed' correctional center.

**Trip Reports – II: Goatcheese & Limestone**  
*Some Reflections on Classical China*  
**Dave Stevens**

In mid-May of this year I again had an opportunity to visit China, this time in the south-central part of the country, visiting several destinations that for centuries were visited by the sages, poets, painters, and philosophers of Classical China, and are still the vacation destinations of choice for millions of Chinese every year. As it turns out, they all owe a debt to limestone and its interesting interactions with running (and percolating) water. To understand this, you need first to realize that for scores of millions of years what is now south-central China was overlain by the sea; the resulting deep limestone deposits were subsequently uplifted, folded, compressed, and tilted by the convulsions that created the Tibetan plateau, and then shaped, scraped, penetrated, occasionally overlaid, and selectively eroded and dissolved by wind and water. The results have included several formations that have caused admiration and awe for generations of Chinese, and more recently, for western visitors.

The first, most central, and most recently in the news is the Three Gorges area of the Yangzi River. The gorges were formed by the cutting power of the third longest and third largest (by volume) river in the world. For centuries they were eaters of ships. It is only in the twentieth century that the worst of the shoals and rapids were blasted out, and only in the last three years that the new dam has raised the level of the water to permit passage year round without the need for trackers (the teams of men—sometimes numbering more than 100—necessary to pull the boats through rough spots).

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Although the three gorges are now rather tame shadows of their former ferocious selves, their drawing power remains significant because they are home to the largest construction project in history, the Three Gorges Dam Project. The dam by itself might be the largest construction project in history, and it has been augmented by the building of new roads and bridges along the whole 660km course of the reservoir, the relocation of whole cities, the creation of new temple-topped islands that extend below lake level, the eventual addition of dams upstream, and the diversion of water from the over-watered south of China to its under-watered north.

The dam is seen variously as an expression of either the incomparable spirit or the insufferable arrogance of the human race. It has forced many people to think deeply about the balance between ecological (and archaeological) damage on the one hand and the elimination of periodic catastrophe (Yangzi flooding has caused serious loss of life and property more than once a decade throughout recorded history) on the other.

The loudest of the classical destinations is Huangguo Shu falls, in western Guizhou Province. Its name honors the *huangguo*, or yellow cayenne, that grows abundantly in the area. It is the largest falls in Asia, and the third in the world, after Niagara and Iguassu. It is nearly square, being 81m x 84m (the ten-foot difference has not inspired me to determine which is height and which is width), and passes an impressive amount of cocoa-colored water and creates quite a satisfying roar and an abundance of spray (quite welcome on a summer day). There are paths up to the falls both at its base and about halfway up; from the latter you can pass behind the falls and even stick your hand in the water. It is one of about 100 falls in the area (one of which—Steep Slope Falls—is more than 100m wide but less substantial), which is also studded with underground rivers and caves.

The strangest of the classical destinations is the Yunnan Stone Forest. A Chinese stone forest (there are several) is not at all like an American petrified forest; it is more like a thicket of pampas grass that has grown to an improbable height and calcified. It is an eerie limestone formation of vertical columns that have weathered to a uniform grey color (save where a piece has recently broken off, and a more typically sedimentary pattern is visible), where the weather has pierced some, sharpened others, and fluted all. Many of the columns have horizontal fractures that give them somewhat the appearance of a stack of blocks. Earthquakes have tumbled some of the upper blocks off in places, and others have been left in what appear to be quite precarious positions. The Authorities have planted grass and trees to provide a pleasing green backdrop, and also to reduce the glare and temperature considerably. I was very much reminded of some of Tolkien's illustrations for his hobbit chronicles. If anything, that impression was heightened by the occasional Official graffiti (passing notables over the years have left calligraphic reminders of their presence), which brought to mind the runish inscriptions on some of Tolkien's mountains.

Most accessible of the five is Guilin and the Li River. The area has been important militarily as well as culturally for centuries. The first emperor (Qin, in about 214 BC) caused a canal to be built to connect the north-flowing Xiang (which flows into the Yangzi) with the south-flowing

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Pearl River complex, which includes the Li. (Primarily so his army of conquest could get supplies.) That canal still exists and is operating. Also still existing is the plowshare-shaped dike that splits the Xiang so that now only 70% of its water flows into the Yangzi; the other 30% flows into the Li and Pearl.

But the canal is not the reason to go to the Li River: the river banks (generously interpreted) are. From Guilin to Yangshuo the Li flows through, beside, and between an unending succession of limestone sugarloaves. Because the cols between the peaks are so deeply cut most places, the peaks appear to be isolated hills, but in reality, it's a whole large complex that looks like rumpled linen, but is in fact deeply eroded limestone. Many of the peaks jut into the river, or present flat faces that the river has scoured over time. Others are dimly seen beyond two or three intervening ranges. The whole looks like something out of a Chinese painting, as in fact it is. This is one of the two venues that appears to have inspired classical Chinese landscape painting (the other is the last of our five destinations), and the rounded hills and mists and water buffalo and sampans and bamboo rafts one sees are strongly reminiscent of earlier times.

The riverside at Yangshuo is also the venue for a very modern spectacular, called *Impression Liu Sanjie*, that uses the very peaks as actors, as well as nearly 1,000 humans, in a highly mythic entertainment that celebrates life in the surrounding ethnic minority villages. (You can get a more complete idea of the performance by searching "impression liu sanjie" on the web.)

The most revered of our five destinations is Huang Shan (Yellow Mountain), where every view has been painted more times than one could count. No intellectual of Confucian China considered his life complete until he had seen all four seasons here. It is a spot of evocative names (*Monkey watching the sea*, *Blossoming writing brush*, *Four immortals*, *Beginning to believe*, *Eighteen arhats*), twisted pines, narrow ridges, rocky outcrops, misty vistas, sheer drops. That familiar image of an isolated rock floating in a sea of cloud, with one or two trees clinging precariously, and perhaps a stream far below, was painted from life here. Because of the frequent mist, the views are constantly changing, and around every corner one encounters yet another postcard-worthy vista.

The ease with which the modern tourist can visit Huang Shan is hard won. Most of the material comforts available on top (which include hotels, restaurants, and clean laundry) were carried up by porters using the time-proven bamboo pole carrying two baskets. (It's about 7.5km and 3,000 vertical feet from the road at the bottom up to the top.) Because the loads are so heavy (we saw porters carrying doors, plywood panels, and even the kitchen sink), many of them employ an additional stick as lever, to ensure that each shoulder carries its share of the weight. They walk with a peculiar bouncing gait that gains some impetus from the swinging baskets. And at least one was able to dial his cell phone with his left hand as he was carrying his load up the mountain.

Ah, you say: He hasn't mentioned goat cheese yet. Among the visitors to the Yunnan Stone Forest in times past were French missionaries from Indo-China. And along with Catholicism the

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French brought wine and goat cheese to China. And to this day, goat cheese (very good goat cheese, as a matter of fact; we had some at lunch after the Stone Forest) is a specialty of Yunnan. (Not exactly *classical* China, but worthy of note.)

China is a fascinating blend of the traditional and the technological, the ancient Chinese ways and modern western ways. It is greatly to be recommended as a destination for anyone wishing broader horizons.

### **Trip Reports – III: Up Alaska Tracy (Mr. Winnie) Baker**

Vancouver: We arrived in Vancouver, landed on time, grabbed our bags pretty quick, passed unmolested through customs, found the Princess Cruise representatives, got our bags to them ...and...waited. Seems the first bus for the ship didn't leave for another hour and a half. (Sigh.)

At 11:30 we were on board the slowest bus in all of British Columbia. This bus (we assume under Princess directions as boarding the ship wasn't allowed until 12:00) managed to turn a 10-minute drive from the airport to the cruise ship into a 40-minute narrated ramble throughout Downtown Vancouver including Chinatown and Gastown and even their version of San Francisco's Tenderloin. The Island Princess is a smaller ship than we experienced on our last cruise. It holds about 2000 passengers and crew, with many more balcony cabins than I was expecting...but with the snow-covered and ice-capped mountains and glaciers rolling by the ship, a balcony cabin is definitely the way to go on this trip.

From the Port of Vancouver we sailed up the Burrard Inlet under Lion's Gate Bridge and through English Bay to the Strait of Georgia, past Vancouver Island, through bays, straits and inlets of various names as we started on our several-days journey up the Inside Passage.

Inside Passage: We spent the next day at sea, sailing through the passages and straits of British Columbia on our way to Southeast Alaska. Islands appeared and receded on the port side as we glided along with the western coast of BC to starboard. We started the day with a one-mile walk around the Promenade deck in a vain attempt to make room for the meals to come. After a hearty breakfast, Winnie went to get the scoop on shopping and whales...not sure how those two are related. I opted for a photo talk, but that turned out to be a little too basic, so I simply wandered, taking in the sights of ship, crew, passengers, sea, and land. I joined Winnie for the end of the talk on whale shopping. We then did a quick sweep through the ship shops and made our way to lunch. Satiated and satisfied, we went to the Champagne Art Auction. (I had promised her champagne for Mothers Day.)

Ketchikan: Home of the Alaska salmon industry, 162 inches of precipitation annually, and totems everywhere. The name means Eagle River in the native Tlingit language; eagles no doubt drawn by the spawning salmon that make their way up the various creeks and streams. After breakfast, we bundled up and made our way down the ramp to take in this small and manageable

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town. We skipped all the pre-planned tours and explored the town on our own. This turned out to be a blessing as we missed the crowds and at times had our stops to ourselves.

We began with a hike uphill to the Totem Heritage Center. Totems of many ages (up to 160 years old), sizes, and purposes are preserved here for all to see. The history and meaning behind the totems is truly fascinating. Many are like family crests; some are burial totems, while others tell of stories or adventures relevant to the family. Totems are part of the rich oral history of the Southeast Alaskan natives. With no written language, these poles told stories of the clan who had them carved for them. Never meant to be up kept or restored, these poles would last only 30-70 years in this wet region, so the fact that the poles here have been kept in a state of arrested development is truly a wonder and gift to all of us who visit.

We then made our way across the river to the Native Fish Hatchery. Before seeing the fish, we got a look at a couple bald eagles that have been taken in by a wildlife rehabilitation center. Neither can live in the wild anymore as they were injured...by idiots who shot one and power lines that blinded the other in one eye. They are truly majestic birds. The naturalist on duty told us an interesting story of how they have such power in their claws that they are sometimes pulled into a river if they hook those claws into a fish that is too big for them. By the drive of nature and survival, they just won't let go. After perusing the fish and learning all the different types of salmon raised at the hatchery, we made our way back to town, where Winnie did some shopping along the restored turn-of-the-century Creek Street. After the shopping, a few more totem poles and it was time to board the ship, as we were off to Juneau by 2:30 pm.

Juneau: Reno loves to call itself the "Biggest Little City In The World." In actuality, Juneau could claim that title quite legitimately. A city of 30,000 people it sits on 3,248 square miles of land. Only Kiruna, Sweden and Sitka, Alaska are larger in size. File that one away for the next Jeopardy. Gold miners founded Juneau, as this was the site of the first Alaskan gold rush in the 1880s.

We awoke and dressed for breakfast, only to find a sign on our door declaring "Happy Anniversary, Fred and Tracy!" Hmmm...okay...oh, that's right. A pre-cruise questionnaire asked if any special occasion was occurring within a few weeks either side of the cruise so I said "our anniversary." How they lost the Wini... and kept the Fred I'm not so sure, but I suspect that my indeterminate name had something to do with it. What the heck...to quote a song from Once Upon A Mattress, "I'm In Love With A Girl Named Fred!"

After breakfast, we wandered toward town and then found a tour that would take us to Mendenhall Glacier and then to the Chapel by the Lake near the University. Mendenhall Glacier is the first glacier I've ever been up close and personal with. It spills down to Mendenhall Lake from the Juneau Ice field and, although retreating, it is still 12 miles long.

The Chapel by the Lake provides stunning views of the Juneau Ice Field across Mendenhall Lake. This log cabin Presbyterian Church was built in the 1950s and is quaint with a full view window by the altar. Now that's my kind of religion.

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Then across the channel to Douglas Park for a view back to the city. Our driver, a Tlingit Indian, told us of his ancestry, the Tlingit matriarchal culture (they take on the mother's name and history), and his grandmother, a well-known basket weaver. Later we would see a picture of her and a sample of her work on top of Mt. Roberts.

We returned to town and made our way up the hill to the Capital Building. This is an obligatory stop whenever we are at a State Capital. We photograph the state seal (usually in the floor under the rotunda) and the dome, a tradition we started many years ago and have collected from Oklahoma to Hawaii. Unfortunately, Alaska's capital building has neither dome nor rotunda. So, we took a picture of the gold-plated seal on the wall and checked another capital off our list.

We toured the City Museum and the State Museum, and then finished our day by taking the funicular up to the top of Mt. Roberts for a fantastic view of the city. While at the top a bald eagle flew right by me and with camera ready, I was able to catch a shot of him in mid-air. With our lucky weather, Mt. Roberts offered sweeping views of Juneau, the channel, and the surrounding mountains. We took a short hike up the trail, but could go no further as the snow was still deep toward the top.

Skagway: The next morning we awoke to find ourselves docked in Skagway. As we headed toward town, we stopped at a tour booth and to check out our options. We decided on a short version of the White Pass Railroad trip: Bus up to Fraser, BC, and train back into Skagway. The trip provided great views of this former Gold Rush trail and you could imagine the hardships faced by the men who braved the trip: 100s of pounds of supplies were required to survive a winter in the Klondike; these men hauled them over the pass and into the Klondike, most only to find that all the claims had already been staked.

Later, while I was getting our National Park Passport stamped, I lucked into a history tour of the town. One Park building is a once popular bar that has been set up just as it had been during the town's heyday. Our tour leader told us of how the town had been much larger at the gold rush height in 1898 (20,000+) and had spread out far beyond its current downtown area. Today fewer than a thousand people live in the town. As the population shrank, the ingenious shop owners simply dragged their buildings in from the outlying areas to form the downtown area we were walking through today.

An interesting form of advertising took place in Skagway. The rock face cliffs that tower above the town were turned into giant billboards by local merchants. This tradition was also picked up by the cruise ships that stopped here: The crews painted the rocks to honor their captains and their ships. Some of these date back to the 1920s and 30s. As our guide explained, the tourist industry in Alaska began even before the gold rush ended.

We shopped a little, and stumbled on a wonderful little museum on ivory and scrimshaw in the back of this one shop. A fantastic display with a lot of different native tools and scrimshaw from whalers, all well explained. Just another fantastic little find that many would miss if they were only looking for another set of bear claw salad tongs.

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Glacier Bay: Capt. Vancouver first explored Glacier Bay in 1794...but Glacier Bay didn't exist then; there was only a wide indentation in the shore with a solid wall of ice. Vancouver named the strait full of ice Icy Strait (makes sense to me) and pushed on. By the time John Muir came in 1879, the glaciers had receded 40 miles creating Glacier Bay. (Today those same glaciers have receded another 25 miles.)

We glide into a glassy, cloudy bay as icebergs of various shapes and sizes drift by. The snow-covered mountains tumble down right to the water. (Think of the Sierra Nevada ending in the Pacific Ocean and you have a pretty good picture of it.) The lack of beach or shingle or foothills allows the boat to go right up to the Johns Hopkins and the Margerie Glaciers. We saw chunks of ice calving into the bay, bears on shore, seals on icebergs, and otters floating in the kelp beds. We ran back and forth awhile on the upper deck before retreating to our balcony to watch the glaciers pass by. We took in two other glaciers on the way in and out. I could picture Muir in his canoe paddling by these behemoths, but was glad for the safety of our large ship when a large chunk of ice calved and fell into the water with a roaring crash.

College Fjord: We spent the next morning and early afternoon on our way to College Fjord, so I went to sign up for the passenger talent show. As I entered the meeting room applause went up. Seems that if I didn't show, they were going to cancel the show as they had so few acts volunteer. (Always glad to be of service to the ship.) I signed up to sing a little ditty I had written for our first cruise several years earlier called *Sea for Two* to the tune of *Tea for Two*. [Too bad Winnie's name isn't Susan. (ed)]

College Fjord takes its name from its collection of glaciers named for the Ivy League schools that funded the Harriman Expedition, which first explored this area. Those on the left side of the Fjord are named for Women's Colleges of the time, those on the right for Men's. After some spectacular calving and sighting of wildlife, we were off to our final port.

Denali: Getting nearly 2,000 people off a ship is no easy feat. Princess (and I imagine the other cruise lines) does a fairly decent job of it. You are assigned a color and letter...then you wait, wait, wait. Obviously, a plan is in place, but it can be frustrating. Ah, well.

Eventually we are shuttled off the ship and right onto our train, the Alaska Rail Midnight Express. The train takes us on a long, nine-hour journey (it rarely travels above 35 miles per hour) through Anchorage and along rivers and mountain ranges to the Princess Denali Wilderness Lodge. Along the way, we saw grizzly bear, moose, caribou, and beaver dams and lodges. One of the most exciting sights was a large collection of bald eagles fishing on the Cook Inlet. Another was crossing Hurricane Gulch and seeing the Panoramic Mountain. A beautiful trip all in all. We arrived at the lodge at about 6:00 pm and wandered around a bit. Not much open yet as the season had just started. We were the first cruise ship in and mingled with the future passengers who were making the trip in reverse.

Denali National Park, one of the earliest National Parks, was founded in 1917 as Mt. McKinley National Park. At 6 million acres, the park is larger than Massachusetts and spreads for miles

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across the Alaska Range of mountains. It is a true wilderness park: None of the lodges, restaurants, and tent cabins that we were used to finding in National Parks. In fact, there is only one road into the park, and that is paved only from the Northern Visitor Center and Headquarters to mile 15. After that a gravel road travels 74 more miles to the end at Kantishna. No private vehicles are allowed across this road, except once a year in September when vehicles can apply for a lottery to be able to drive the entire route.

It was cold and a little rainy as we boarded our bus for our four-hour history and nature tour. Our driver and guide was a transplant who came here in the mid-90s and fell in love, a story we had heard many times over our trip. He explained the history of Denali and how the road we were traveling on was built. We stopped at a cabin that was used by the road crew and then served as a shelter for the rangers out on patrol. An actor portrayed a real-life wanderer from the 1920s who had worked on the road crew and had come to Alaska; his portrayal was based on letters from his uncle who had told him of the wonders of this then territory.

We crossed the tundra and saw herds of caribou wandering the vast valleys and washes that comprise a large part of the park. We saw willow ptarmigan (Alaska's state bird), a quail-like bird with distinct markings, all over the park. We also saw snowshoe hares who had shed their winter white hopping across the tundra. A member of the Athabascan tribe (who called this land their own for eons before we showed up) met us when we reached the turnaround point. He spoke of the history of his people in the area and the rivalries they had with other tribes who lived to the north and east. It was very interesting to hear of how his people lived off this land in the harsh environment of winter by moving to where they could be out of the Alaska Range's influence on the weather. Another interesting fact was the relationship between the Athabascan and the Navajo and Apache of the Southwest. Seems the language and bloodlines are nearly indistinguishable, showing the migration of the people south.

After leaving the park we grabbed some lunch and boarded a bus for the next stop on the other side of the park, the Princess Mt. McKinley Lodge. The lodge sits up on a hill with a huge picture window that, on a clear day, provides dramatic views of "the Big One" (as *denali* means in Athabascan). On the way to the lodge, our driver proved his ability when a motorcyclist skidded out on a curve in the wet roadway and his bike went skittering right by us after our driver took evasive action. He jumped off the bus to check out the cyclist, finding him okay as he had leather from head to foot. His bike was a different story, but we left that to the Highway Patrol and made our way to the lodge, where we took a nature walk during the afternoon and then had dinner before turning in early. The weather just wasn't cooperating for a view of McKinley.

Mt. McKinley: The next morning a tulle fog covered the ground and we wondered if we would just be out of luck for McKinley. We had been told that, at nearly 30,000 feet, it makes its own weather, and full views of it are rare, even for the residents. We missed the first bus to Talkeetna, a small town about an hour south of the lodge where we hoped to catch a glimpse of McKinley. (One problem with Princess is they don't announce or label their busses and unless you

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persevere, you will not know where or when you are supposed to be. Lesson learned, we got the next bus.) Our miss was actually a blessing in disguise: Not only did the town not open until 10:00 am, but the sun decided to make its appearance about that time and we watched as the mountain came in and out of view from the clouds. Then, on the trip back, our bus stopped at a turnout just outside of town that provided sweeping unbridled views of McKinley. The weather couldn't have been more perfect and we caught views of it off and on all the way back to the lodge. When we got back, we found that it had clouded over once again and the view from the picture windows was not anywhere near as good as what we had seen in Talkeetna.

Anchorage: We took our time getting up for the first time on the entire trip. We packed up the clothes and dropped off the luggage to be held for our redeye flight home. We began our walking tour at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center and met a wonderful Ranger who attempted to recruit us for summer work! I must admit I was tempted. We then made our way over to the Log Cabin Visitor Center for some maps and information. We walked down to the Alaska Statehood Monument with its bronze sculpture of Pres. Eisenhower, after which we made our way over to the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail that traces the coastline for nearly 11 miles. Along this trail are historic Anchorage homes that date back to the early 1900s. Included is the Anderson Home and Museum. Anderson was a Swedish settler who came to Anchorage when it was still a city of tents and mud. We made our way to the Captain Cook Monument and looked out across Cook Inlet where he anchored in 1778.

We then made our way over to the Alaska Museum of History and Art to catch the shuttle to the Alaska Native Heritage Center. We saw a native dance performed by members of the Yupik and then took a tour of the grounds that had various shelters and crafts of the different tribes that populate Alaska. It was interesting to see the different methods of adapting to the differing environments...the big cedar log long houses of the Tlingit from the Southeast stood in stark contrast to the mud and grass huts of the Aleut from the far North. Igloos are nowhere to be found. They are used as temporary shelter for the hunters of the far north, not homes.

We then returned on the shuttle to the Alaska History and Art Museum. This proved to be one of the great joys of our stay in Anchorage if not our entire trip. The art exhibits were fantastic, and the history was fascinating. The exhibit was arranged chronologically from the time of the Bering Land Bridge through the year 2000. It is going to be remodeled soon to bring it up to present day. The information on the first European contacts, the Russian settlers, McKinley's purchase, the gold rushes, the World War II battles on the Aleutian Islands, and of course the oil pipeline – the latest gold rush – is especially interesting.

## Epilogue

Alaska is huge, more than twice the size of Texas. And despite our best efforts, one cannot “see it all” or come close to doing it justice in the time we had. I can tell you that if we knew then what we do now, we would have rented a car when we got off the ship and made our way on our own inland. While the Midnight Express train was a great ride, the Princess Lodges are nice, and

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not having to handle our luggage was a wonderful perk, it would have been even better to explore Denali more and to go on to Fairbanks for a time. We would also have liked a little more time in the towns we stopped in along the Inside Passage. Although small, they provide so much to do and see within and around that we would have put that extra time to very good use. Perhaps, one day, we will return on our own and do just that.

### **Trip Reports – IV: Down Alaska Per & Eleanor Dahl**

Fairbanks: Uneventful flight from SFO, and an evening at leisure. In the morning we embarked on a 3 1/2 hour river cruise aboard *Riverboat Discovery III*, a four-deck sternwheeler. It was built near Seattle, shipped to Alaska in 1897, weighs 280 tons and carries 900 passengers. No sooner had we pulled away from the dock than a floatplane, as they call them here, landed alongside and lifted off again. Our first stop is the Trailbreaker Kennel, where Susan Butcher (a four-time winner of the Iditarod dog sled race from Anchorage to Nome) gave us a demonstration of mushing. Once the brake is released, the dogs yelp and yowl, leap and twirl, as the team races around a small lake.

The next stop was a recreated Chena Indian Village along the Tanana River. Dixie Alexander, renowned Athabascan beadwork artist, demonstrated skills that her forebearers developed to ensure their survival and enhance their quality of life through the long Arctic winters. On the return trip we passed a typical bush airstrip, with another air show demonstration.

We lunched at the Chena Pump House Restaurant and Saloon. The Pump House, overlooking the Chena River, was constructed by the Fairbanks Exploration Company in 1933 to pump water in support of gold dredging operations in the gold fields of the Fairbanks district. Then, a view of the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline, at a spot 450 miles south of Prudhoe Bay (the total length of the 48-inch diameter pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez is 800 miles). Part of the pipeline goes underground where permafrost allows it; the rest sits on 78,000 above-ground supports spaced 60 feet apart, is insulated and covered, and raised high enough off the ground to span rivers and to allow wildlife to pass under the pipe. After a Fairbanks city tour, we begin our 2.5-hour drive to Denali National Park, arriving at the Grande Denali Lodge, on a bluff high above Nemana River, early in the evening.

Denali: At 9:30 a.m., “Flightseeing” (a helicopter flight over the mountains). We were fortunate enough to ride in front with the pilot, and thus had a marvelous view of the complex ridgelines of the Alaska Range. After an hour we set down on the Yanert Glacier, stepped gingerly onto the surface—we had been given glacier booties before takeoff—taking care to walk on the ice and to keep away from regions covered by snow (who knows what lay below?), and peered into a seemingly bottomless crevasse. The whole flight lasted two hours, covering a distance of 40 miles.

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After lunch we boarded a modified school bus for a 50-mile Denali Tundra Wilderness Tour. It amounted to a 7-hour ride, mostly in rain and fog, through Denali National Park & Preserve—six million acres in all. Despite the poor weather, we did see plenty of wildlife, including a fine view of a brown grizzly, a moose, several caribou, and some Dall sheep. The highlight was a rather rare sight of a wolf, sauntering nonchalantly in front of our bus, refusing to let us pass. We had a civilized exposure to the hardships of the great north with our evening meal: a light snack box supper—mainly paper-thin smoked reindeer meat on a roll. The driver made the best of it, handing out a rather nice booklet, *Denali: A Living Tapestry*, with photos taken by the many bus drivers operating in the Park.

Anchorage: Late morning checkout and short ride to a train depot, where we boarded our double-deck, glass-domed rail car for the 8-hour ride to Anchorage. The dome car—there's only one on this particular Alaska Railroad train—was provided with full bar service, and an upper-level outside viewing platform. Splendid view of Mt. McKinley and other scenery along the way. Unfortunately, dinner did not live up to the rest of the experience.

The Anchorage city tour the next morning included the Anchorage Museum of History and Art and a spot near the airport where we saw remaining evidence of the great Good Friday earthquake of 1964, the largest recorded earthquake in the Western Hemisphere (Richter 9.2 with a good five minutes of shaking). Near the airport we also saw the world's largest floatplane base on Lakes Hood and Spenard.

Juneau: Our flight to Juneau was a beautiful one, over rugged mountains, culminating in the Mendenhall Glacier above Juneau. (Although it is the capital of Alaska, Juneau is accessible only by boat and aircraft.)

There we boarded the *Yorktown Clipper*, a rather small ship measuring 257 feet, with an 8-foot draft, two diesel propulsion engines, and bowthruster. She carried two lecturers and naturalists (lectures included offerings on The Marine Realm and Glaciers) in addition to captain and crew. Besides our fellow University of Wisconsin alumni, the passengers represented various other university alumni groups, the largest by far being those from Penn State.

Elfin Cove: En route to Elfin Cove, saw at least five cavorting humpback whales in a pod, an immature bald eagle [you can tell it's immature because it isn't bald? (ed)] (we'll see plenty of bald eagles before the cruise is over), and otters. After lunch, long-time Elfin Cove resident Mary Jo Lord-Wild came aboard to welcome us to this tiny hamlet before we were ferried ashore by DIB or Zodiac. (On Chicagof Island, Elfin Cove is accessible only by boat and float plane. The winter population is fewer than 25 souls—it mushrooms to more than 200 in summer—who live in houses built on stilts. The only sidewalk is an elevated boardwalk.)

Glacier Bay: 6:00 a.m. arrival in Bartlett Cove, Glacier Bay National Park, where we pick up Park Rangers for the day, who will provide commentary about flora, geology, and history of the park. The day was spent cruising Glacier Bay, with close-up views of the Margerie and Grand Pacific Tidewater Glaciers; contrary to the general trend, the Grand Pacific and a few other

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glaciers are actually advancing. The Margerie was caught calving, during which we heard some “White Thunder.” Wildlife included harbor seals and Pacific loons.

Skagway: The next morning we docked in Skagway, the northernmost point of the Inside Passage. Skagway and the nearby ghost town of Dyea were the starting point for the White Pass and Chilkoot Trails to the Klondike Goldfields. One of the wildest, wooliest places on the continent, Skagway sported 80 saloons—the site of fistfights and drawn pistols, shell games, scams, and occasional murder. Today’s Skagway population of 850 pales in comparison to the bustling city of 20,000 during the height of the 1897-98 stampede. After a short city tour in refurbished signature 1920s street cars driven and narrated by lady guides dressed in period costume we boarded the train for the White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad Summit, a climb and descent lasting approximately 4 hours.

The forty-mile round trip narrow gauge railroad climbs from tidewater at Skagway to the U.S.-Canadian border at the summit of White Pass at 2,865-ft. Here Mounted Police once waved on stamperders hauling the required ton of supplies (needed for one year in the north). Our climb featured tunnels and trestles, including the famous steel cantilever bridge above Dead Horse Gulch, and cascading waterfalls, viewed from our restored replica coaches pulled by vintage diesel-electric locomotives. The WP&YR was designated an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 1994—an honor shared by only 36 world civil engineering marvels, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Panama Canal. During World War II the railroad, then steam-powered, was the chief supplier for the U.S. Army’s Alaska Highway construction project.

Skagway is now a restored Gold Rush town and headquarters of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. A 12-million-dollar face-lift has restored Broadway to its glory days: Wooden boardwalks, false-fronted buildings, and horse-drawn carriages give visitors a glimpse of the Skagway that greeted gold seekers when they stepped off the docks in 1897. A gold rush graveyard displays markers for Bad Guy Soapy Smith, crime boss of Skagway, and Good Guy Frank Reid, the town’s surveyor. After dinner back on board, Steve Hites, part guide, part historian, and part street actor, spun yarns and sang songs about the Klondike Gold Rush and life in the Great North.

Haines: 6:00 a.m. arrival in Haines. At the time of the first European forays into the area, this territory was inhabited by the wealthy and powerful Chilkat Tlingit Indians. Their principal village is still on the outskirts of Haines, at Klukwan on the Chilkat River.

We began our Haines Cultural Highlights Tour with a scenic drive and photo stop at Chilkat Lake State Park, with bald eagles perched here and there. Next, the Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center, with its outstanding collection of Chilkat blankets; these ceremonial robes, made from cedar bark and mountain goat wool, took up to two years to weave. Our final stop was the Tsirku Canning Company, where a reconditioned salmon canning line runs at one-tenth normal speed, so one can follow the entire process from flat tin sheets to labeled cans. The way back to the ship passed through Fort William H. Seward, a National Historic Site.

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Sitka: At 6:30 a.m. the next morning, the *Yorktown Clipper* navigated the Whitestone and Sergius Narrows, and at 9:30 a.m. arrived in Sitka. Sitka is a traditional settlement of the Tlingit Indians. Today it is the only town sited on the outer coast of Southeast Alaska. It became a Russian capital in 1804, when Russians bargained with the local chief for ground to erect a fort. Although it has been in American hands since 1867, Sitka nowadays provides a pleasant blend of Indian, Russian, and American cultures in an unspoiled Alaskan wilderness.

After breakfast, we are off on a tour of Historic Russian America and the Sitka Raptor Center, with our first stop at the latter—basically, a bald eagle hospital. There we learn how their volunteer program deals with injured birds, from capture to rehabilitative care and their hopeful release back into the wild. Following an introductory talk, we view the clinic, gallery, and mews housing the eagles, bald and golden, as well as hawks, owls, and falcons. We then visit the Sitka National Historical Park where, in 1804, the Tlingits fought the white settlers in the Battle of Sitka. The beautifully wooded park contains an impressive collection of Haida and Tlingit totem poles. Our final stop is the Sheldon Jackson Museum. Named after its Presbyterian founder, the Museum, dating from 1890, houses one of the state's finest collection of Eskimo, Aleut and Athabascan weapons, tools, and crafts. A definite *must* for any visitor to Sitka.

After lunch we wander around town, first climbing the many stairs of Castle Hill, on which the transfer of Alaska from Russian control took place in 1867; that is, the site of "Seward's Folly." We also visit Saint Michael's Cathedral, a replica of the 1840s church destroyed by fire in 1966, and a reminder that the Russian Orthodox Church is still an important presence in these parts. Virtually all the icons and other objects of art were rescued during the fire. In the late afternoon the Sitka Tribal Dancers invite the passengers back into town to experience the dance, music, and culture of the Tlingit Indians.

Tracy Arm: Countless waterfalls, turquoise waters, blue icebergs, spectacular tidewater glaciers await us today. After a 1:00 p.m. crossing over Tracy Arm Bar, the former terminal moraine of the Sawyer Glaciers, we enter Tracy Arm, a steep-walled fjord within the Tongass National Forest. Ice floes permitting, we may be treated to grand views of the Sawyer Glaciers, which have retreated 25 miles over the past 250 years (in 2004 alone they retreated fully half a mile).

As we sail up the fjord, a humpback whale crosses our bow at close quarters, and beats the green water with its pectoral fins. Harbor seals are also spotted, reposing on ice floes gliding by. The ice floes are a much deeper blue, due to the ice purity, than we observed in Antarctica. Alas, the floes prove too numerous to allow us to reach the glaciers. (The concern seems to be mainly propeller damage.) Heading back down the fjord, we nudged in towards the "hole in the wall waterfall." Within a couple of feet of the falling water, younger crew members catch glacier runoff water in pitchers off the bow, which we sample in the Lounge.

Home: Wake-up call and breakfast at 4:15 a.m.! We leave Juneau on a very early Alaska flight for the South Forty-Eight, as they say, and on to SFO. It has been an exciting experience, leaving us with wonderful memories.

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## Trip Reports – V: Around Iceland

### John Kadyk

At the San Francisco airport, while waiting in the lounge to board our flight to Reykjavik, Iceland, we listened to a passenger playing an Icelandic version of the violin, played on the lap, and looking like a fiddle with anorexia – very narrow. This was our first contact with Icelandic tradition, and a prelude to learning how very different is Icelandic culture. Ann and I had been suspicious of the reality of this trip, designated as “The Grand Tour”, which was being arranged through Icelandair by friends, since it was more than just difficult to get in touch with Icelandair. (Icelandair offers very inexpensive flights to major European cities (e.g. Paris, London), passing through Reykjavik, with no extra cost for a stopover in Iceland. They had only begun non-stop flights to San Francisco a few weeks before our trip, however, and we had great difficulty contacting the appropriate people, settling the details, and coordinating the trip.)

The tour did turn out to be real, with about two dozen of us (including a sizeable French contingent) traveling in a van around the perimeter of Iceland, including much history, many fjords, geysers (spelled “geisirs” and pronounced: “geezers”), fumaroles, and other volcanic activity. At least one large geyser was continuous, although several were intermittent, such as Old Faithful in Yellowstone Park. One spouts much higher than Old Faithful. [The eponym for all geysers, Geisir, has been dormant for years (sigh). (ed)] I suppose the most familiar (to Americans) part of the history is that involving Leif Erikson, who was born in Iceland, although his most famous voyage originated in Greenland. Sometime shortly after 1000 AD, he traveled to North America (Newfoundland), and stayed for about one year, then returned. Other Greenlanders made this same trip soon afterwards. This seems to be indisputably true, since many artifacts exist that were left behind in America by these early travelers. (And so North America was actually discovered by an Icelander.)

Iceland is about the size of Kentucky, and shaped somewhat like an amoeba, with a very irregular coastline, mostly due to glacier-carved fjords. It lies at the northern end of the mid-Atlantic rift, just below the arctic circle, and has been created by the volcanic activity associated with the rift. The geographical location is  $65^{\circ} 30' \pm 1^{\circ}$  north latitude. One small island off the northern coast is actually intersected by the arctic circle ( $66^{\circ} 32'$ ), and some of our group took a short flight there just for the novelty. The rift is actually visible in certain areas on the north and south coasts, and much geothermal activity occurs in these regions. The entire island is volcanic in origin, and consists of multiple lava flows, some dating back millions of years, so there is fertile soil covering all but the most recent flows. The higher interior regions, 7000' at the highest point, are covered with glaciers, and the melting ice and snow results in numerous creeks, rivers, and waterfalls—the flat lava flows allow the meltwater to travel long distances before dropping off a steep cliff, perhaps 200' high at the termination of a flow; we saw many such, all of which are beautiful, and some are spectacular. We visited the most powerful waterfall in all of Europe, the Dettifoss, but also saw several other large falls, notably Gullfoss, “Iceland’s Niagara Falls”. Hydroelectric power accounts for about 60% of the electric power, the

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remainder being geothermal power. Geothermal heating is also used extensively for building heat. Geothermal “wells” have been drilled, as deep as 10,000 feet.

Our Grand Tour traveled along most of the perimeter of the island, for about 1750 miles, with mostly one-night stops, following many fjords on the northeast and northwest coasts, which were quite beautiful and spectacular. There were many puffins, eider ducks, arctic terns and other native birds. The terns were intent on drawing blood from your scalp if you invaded their territory (some of us got pecked). The morning and evening meals were provided, and were uniformly very good. Our season was close to the summer solstice, so it never got dark, hardly even dim, and most hotels had a set of especially opaque drapes that helped make it “night-time”. The weather was generally good, but with some wind and occasional rain, usually ending after short periods. Weather was quite changeable: my watch altimeter indicated that the barometer (inches of mercury) frequently changed by 0.5” from day-to-day, and was seemingly anti-correlated with the weather: good weather with a low barometer! Temperatures averaged in mid-50’s Fahrenheit, though it could be cooler in mornings and evenings. Iceland is one of the few places in the world that keeps Greenwich mean time [not even Greenwich does it any more! (ed)]: seven hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Time.

Icelandic is not closely related to any other European language, except possibly Norwegian, but split off from that language centuries ago; it is called “old Norse”. So, like people with other unusual tongues (e. g. Hungarians), the Icelanders learn several other languages, and especially English (or rather American), which is required in school, and nearly everyone speaks without an accent. (Our guide was multilingual, and fluent in French and English, and of course in Icelandic (we heard him conversing in Spanish, and he said he knows German – which I can fully believe).) The capital city is Reykjavik, with a population of about 180,000, about 2/3 of the total Iceland population. [There are more sheep than people in Iceland. (ed)] The city’s name means “smoking harbor” referring to the fumaroles that exist in the area. One sees steam vent pipes fuming away throughout the city, and, of course, the heating of buildings there is all geothermal. The residents seem all to be very friendly and honest, and used to overcoming hardships (such as long and cold winters).

The trip was unique and very worthwhile. The population density is small, so everything seemed relaxed (compared to Berkeley). However, there is both modern and traditional culture that is quite impressive, and wonderful museums, cathedrals, etc. And the food is very good, and comes in many ethnicities. It must be said, however, that prices are 2 –3 times what you might expect to pay in our locale. It is easy to spend with abandon, since credit cards are used universally for almost everything, much more so than we are accustomed to.

More information can be obtained from many Iceland tourist Web sites and from Icelandair. A good article on touring Iceland appeared recently, July 17, in the S.F. Chronicle Travel section. Two of the Web URLs mentioned are: [www.goiceland.org](http://www.goiceland.org) and [www.tourist.reykjavik.is](http://www.tourist.reykjavik.is). Happy traveling.



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**Calendar of Board Meetings & Luncheons**

L: August 18, 2005  
B: October 13, 2005 L: November 17, 2005  
B: January 12, 2006 L: February 16, 2006  
B: April 13, 2006 L: May 18, 2006  
B: July 13, 2006 L: August 17, 2006

Board meetings take place in the LBNL cafeteria at 3:45 on the dates mentioned; we welcome attendance by interested members.

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